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Letter dated 31 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the parliamentary elections in Georgia issued on 30 March 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Richard **Ryan**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 31 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the parliamentary elections in Georgia issued on 30 March 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the preliminary findings and conclusions of the OSCE/ODIHR International Election Observation Mission to the parliamentary elections in Georgia on 28 March 2004. The findings state that the elections demonstrated commendable progress compared with previous elections and that the conduct of the elections has brought Georgia closer to meeting OSCE and Council of Europe standards for democratic elections. The European Union welcomes, inter alia, the Mission's findings that ballot secrecy was improved during this election and that freedom of expression was enjoyed by the media in general, with the exception of Adjara.

The European Union has also taken note of the concerns of the Mission outlined in its preliminary report, including the complete lack of commitment by Adjaran authorities to guarantee sufficient conditions for the conduct of a meaningful democratic election in that region; the failure of the State television to provide a balanced coverage of the election campaign and the continuing lack of a clear separation between State administration and political party structures. We expect the Georgian authorities to address the Mission's concerns and to continue to work constructively with OSCE and the Council of Europe to further democratization.

The European Union recalls its willingness to help Georgia overcome its pressing difficulties through the full range of European Union instruments and policies. The European Union calls on all parties to ensure continued calm and to make progress on the important economic and political reform challenges facing the country.

The European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Heikki Talvitie, has been in Georgia for the period of the elections, and continues to keep the Council informed of developments there. On Wednesday, 31 March, he is due to visit Adjara.